



## 'Back when I was a cadet and camp was hard ...'

By Col. Steven Corbett  
Warrior Forge Commander

How many times has a cadet at Warrior Forge heard these words? Okay, I admit that I may have used phrase myself once or twice during my tenure in Cadet Command. Through a strange



Corbett

coincidence, my mother recently sent me a box of papers and letters from my youth. Among them, I found the very first letter that I wrote home from the 1979 ROTC Advanced Camp, here at Fort Lewis. I was a member of the 2nd Platoon, C

Company, housed in building 11D32, which is now in the 8th Regiment.

A couple of enlightening excerpts:

*"Dear M&D --*

*Just thought I'd pen a quick note to let you know that I've arrived, and the fun is about to start. We got here in one piece ... we actually reported in a day early, and spent a couple of hours in the cadet club -- nice to have a couple of beers to get this started off right ... our two TACs seem pretty nice. Both are Vietnam Vets -- the captain is a grunt and still seems to miss 'Nam. Our NCO is a Special Forces master sergeant who has promised to take us fishing during our first weekend off....We go to get our physicals tomorrow morning then have the rest of the day off to go to the PX on the cadet shuttle."*

All right...maybe it wasn't quite as arduous as I remembered. What I do remember is LOTS of time spent on ranges, and very little time in the field. I also remember very clearly getting a positive and a negative spot report for the same

thing on the same day. I was the Company First Sergeant on the first day, and rapidly figured out that many of my fellow cadets were "Drill and Ceremonies Challenged." I moved the company around throughout the day (I think we went to CIF), by repositioning myself wherever the company needed to be and directing, "Fall out and fall in on me." (Seemed like a good idea at the time). My NCO thought it was a great plan (SF guys aren't famous for their D&C skills either), but the Captain seemed extremely agitated, for some reason.

I've spent some time over the past few days, rewriting the letter, as it would possibly look today:

*"Dear M&D --*

*Just thought I'd IM you before they take away all of our electronic devices. We got here in one piece, and I studied my FM 7-8 on the plane. We reported a day early, and got in-processed, now we are responsible for moving our fellow cadets around, and getting the barracks set up. Our three TACs seem pretty sharp. The captain has done two tours in Iraq. He was a Transportation Company Commander and was in combat almost every day. Our lieutenant is a PT stud, and I'm terrified they'll put her in charge of remedial PT. Our NCO is a combat engineer who has done a tour in Afghanistan as well, and knows more about IEDs than any person on earth. We get our physicals tomorrow, then our APFT. I'm a little worried because I hear that the LDAC average is about 265, and I usually only score in the 250's. We'll take our land nav test that night, then go to the woods the day after that ..."*

Our cadets are in a different ROTC, a different summer training program, and will serve a different American Army in a different world. For all of you cadets who hear "back when I was a cadet and camp was hard..." from some old colonel, smile, nod, say "Yes Sir." If your PTO lieutenant says them, listen a bit more closely, and know that your Warrior Forge experience is even tougher than theirs was.

By Command Sgt. Major Victor Mercado  
Warrior Forge Command Sgt. Major

Since my last article two more regiments have activated, one more is about to activate and another is filling up quickly. The total numbers of cadet command and support cadres on the ground is about 3,000 strong and going up every week. As you can tell, Warrior Forge is almost fully alive. The amazing part of this major training event is the dedication and commitment of everyone involved.

The sad part of Warrior Forge for the boss and I is sending cadets home for Physical, APFT, or Land Navigation failures. Many of these cadets were not prepared with the basics to attack the challenges of these events. The only good thing about the cadets being dropped is that they will have a fresh opportunity to do it again next year.



Mercado

In just this last week the boss and I have been very busy certifying commitments. We want the best, safest, most realistic and most challenging training for all our cadets. Our goal is for the last cadet to get the same level of training as the first cadet. We have assembled the best corps of officers and NCOs to make Warrior Forge 2006 a memorable one. The commander and I are very proud of all the hard work being performed by our cadre and employees.

This year Warrior Forge is unique because we have taken the time of our busy schedule to dedicate four committee sites with the names of fallen officers. Their source of commissioning was ROTC. These memorial ceremonies put everything in perspective and highlights why we volunteer to serve in this great Army. Heroes like them give us the energy and motivation to continue the fight against terrorism. Please keep in your daily prayers all the fallen comrades, their families, and our deployed battle buddies.

I'm going to end for now with my favorite phrase, "Everything we do is training and training is everything we do." To be successful in your military career you must always plan your daily task as a training event (in Operation Order format) and always use Troop Leading Procedures (TLP). I guarantee that if you take this approach you will always keep your followers informed, and most importantly, save their lives.

Train hard but train safe. Safety first, safety always!



Col. Steven R. Corbett  
Commander

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